

T. S. No. 97082

Copy # 1

9 March 1953

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

Psychological Strategy Board

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SUBJECT:

Additional CIA comments on plan for psychological exploitation of Stalin's death.

1. Submitted herewith in rough form are a number of additional comments which have been provided by the Intelligence and Estimates Side of this Agency. Taken on the whole, this paper is an excellent job; surprisingly good in light of the speed with which it was put together and the inadequacy of opportunity for the viewpoints of a sufficient number of the intelligence experts to be registered. There is one point of major importance which should be cleared up, and a number of additional points ranging from fairly important to relatively insignificant.

2. The "Estimate of the Situation" is, on the whole, very good, but to avoid confusion it should be entitled "The Psychological Estimate of the Situation", and a footnote should be added keyed to an asterisk following the section heading, as follows: "This Psychological Estimate should be read in conjunction with the Special Intelligence Estimate of the situation (S. E. 30 -- scheduled for publication 10 March)."

3. Also with reference to the estimate, paragraph 5 f., is regarded as either unclearly or incorrectly stated and in any case requiring revision. The last sentence of this two-sentence paragraph seems to state that serious friction within the regime is more likely to arise over domestic issues than over any other issues. It is the view of this Agency (which I believe to be supported by Messrs. Kennan and Bohlen) that friction is more apt to arise within the regime over foreign or external issues than over domestic issues. Otherwise stated, the members of the ruling group are more likely to have important differences in interpretation of the significance and portent of external developments than in what they feel about internal Soviet affairs. They have differed in the past and can be presumed to continue, and even intensify their differences, with regard to both the capabilities and the intentions of the United States and the free world.

certain
others in
the Agency

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐

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The Intelligence people in the Agency feel that it is not possible to draw this particular conclusion at this time.

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4. It has been suggested that there is room for doubt as to whether the military have, in fact, been given more recognition and greater responsibility under the new set-up than previously. For example, it is contended that Zhukov has not, in fact, received a new post -- he has already held this one (see paragraph b (3) of the estimate).

5. Some question has been raised concerning the various actions in the military field which are suggested on Pages 20, 21 and 22, as to whether these take sufficiently into account the risk that such actions would be interpreted by the Kremlin as seriously provocative or threatening. Accepting the validity of the appraisal that moves on our part, which would be judged to be provocative or threatening, would have two adverse consequences -- viz. the consolidation of the regime and the stimulation of sharp reactions (see page 5) -- it would seem that actions in the military field should be carefully selected and designed and that, to the fullest extent possible, they be accompanied by the offering of "peaceful alternatives".

6. Concerning the recommendation contained in paragraph 5 b, (page 24) this is considered quite sound and it is recommended that thought be given to expanding this type of effort into other fields; for example, by personal letters from outstanding personalities of the free world to members of the new Soviet set-up, seeking to renew old acquaintanceship or conceivably to extend invitations to visit, etc. As examples, it was suggested that General Bradley might write to General Zhukov and possibly that Mr. Stassen might write to Mikoyan.

7. [REDACTED] areas, more point should be made of the fact that the Soviet system has suffered an irreparable loss of strength through the death of Stalin and that this is a time for purposeful, determined and united action on the part of the West.

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If [REDACTED] has any further questions, it is suggested that he get in touch with Mr. Becker direct.

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[REDACTED]
FRANK C. WISN R.
Deputy Director (Plans)

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